



Rhode Island Rivers Council

c/o RI Water Resources Board
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908
www.ririvers.org



Minutes of the November 9, 2011, Public Hearing
on the Re-designation of Four Local Watershed Councils
Minutes of November 9, 2011, Meeting of the RI Rivers Council
Conference Room C
One Capitol Hill
Providence, Rhode Island

ATTENDANCE:

A. Members Present

Guy Lefebvre (Chair)
Ted Callender (Vice Chair)
Paul Gonsalves
Lisa McGreavy
Jane Sherman
Claudia Staniszewski

B. Members Absent

Mike Walker
Charles Vandemoer

C. Guests in Attendance

Ann Morrill – Kickemuit River Council
Greg Gerritt – Friends of the Moshassuck
Alicia Lehrer – Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council
Jean Lynch – Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council
Robert Nero – Pawtuxet River Authority & Watershed Council
Michael Tannulaite – Kickemuit River Council

1. Public Hearing on the Re-designation of Local Watershed Councils

Mr. Lefebvre opened the public hearing at 4pm and noted that the public hearing was advertised in the *Providence Journal* on October 8, 2011.

2. Overview of Responsibility and Process

Mr. Lefebvre stated that four watershed councils are candidates for re-designation to be state recognized local watershed councils for a five year period: the Kickemuit River Council, the Friends of the Moshassuck, the Pawtuxet River Authority & Watershed Council, and the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council. Section 46-28-8 of the RI General Laws highlights two specific elements that accompany the designation by the RIRC. First, the designation gives legal standing to watershed councils for their appearances on behalf of their watersheds before local and state public bodies. The RIRC developed and adopted, in cooperation with the state, a notice rule providing for watershed councils to request and receive notification of actions being requested or taken within their watersheds. Second, the designation makes watershed councils eligible for annual grants from funds allocated by the General Assembly to the RIRC.

3. Acceptance of Comments by Re-designation Applications

Mr. Lefebvre invited comments from the public and representatives of the applicants. Ms. Morrill expressed appreciation for the support from the RIRC, and Mr. Tannulaites stated that the designation enabled them to get notice of a major development occurring on the Kickemuit River. He also noted an exciting quahog project that the Kickemuit River Council is working on with Roger Williams University. Mr. Gerritt stated that the Friends of the Moshassuck has worked hard on several projects, and hoped that their reforestation project would be a model for forest restoration eliminating invasive weeds. Ms. Lehrer stated that the support and funding from RIRC enabled them to have effective advocacy in the watershed.

4. Closure of Public Hearing

There being no further public comment, Mr. Lefebvre closed the public hearing at 4:15 pm.

Rhode Island Rivers Council Monthly Meeting

1. Call to Order

Mr. Lefebvre called the meeting to order at 4:16 pm and noted that a quorum was present.

2. Consideration of Re-designations of Local Watershed Councils

Ms. Sherman moved, and Ms. McGreavy seconded, a motion to approve the re-designation applications for the Kickemuit River Council, the Friends of the Moshassuck, the Pawtuxet River Authority & Watershed Council, and the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council. Ms. McGreavy, Ms. Sherman and Mr. Lefebvre reviewed all of the applications. Each was complete and reflected well on the work of the Councils in their watersheds. Mr. Lefebvre called for a vote on the motion, and the approvals were passed unanimously.

3. Allocation of Funds from FY12 Budget for Grants and Operating Expenses

The Rivers Council received \$22,444 from the FY12 state budget, and requested grant applications for up to \$4000 from designated watershed councils. Ms. McGreavy and Mr. Lefebvre presented a summary of the applications received. It was noted that the Councils quickly responded to questions the reviewing team had. The summary sheet recommended the following allocation of the grant funds:

Kickemuit River Council – requested \$4,000, RIRC recommended \$3,000 for fish ladder sign

Fish Ladder sign \$3000, cookbook reorder \$860.80, computer additions \$139.20

Narrow River Preservation Association – requested \$4,000, RIRC recommended \$3,000

Analyze 20 years of water quality data in "RiverWatchResults – 20th Anniversary Impact Report"

Pawtuxet River Authority & Watershed Council – requested \$4,000, RIRC recommended \$3,000

Trail maintenance and improvements to Phenix-Harris Riverwalk in Coventry

Salt Ponds Coalition – requested \$3,600, RIRC recommended \$3,600

Nutrient/chorophyll bacteria analysis for six salt pond sampling sites in the Green Hill and Point Judith Ponds.

Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association – requested \$4,000, RIRC recommended \$4,000

Coordinating Project Wet in RI, a nationwide, education based nonprofit organization focusing on water education

Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council – requested \$4,000, RIRC recommended \$4,000

Education, recreation and monitoring programs, trailer and canoe maintenance

Friends of the Moshassuck – requested \$500, recommended \$500

Collyer Field Restoration. This is a 30-year project currently in year ten. The project involves suppression of the invasive species Knotweed through the creation of a forest canopy (shade). Funds were requested to buy six trees plus transport them.

The remainder of the funds, \$1,444 to be transferred to the RIRC administrative account.

Discussion of the specific allocations continued. Ms. Morrill expressed her strong preference that the cookbook funding be added to the grant requested by the Kickemuit River Council. Mr. Lefebvre asked if the proposed fish ladder sign would be located in RI or MA, and the response was RI. The Kickemuit River Council has permission from the director of the Bristol County Water Authority to post the sign. Ms. Sherman requested that they select a RI vendor if one can be found that meets their specifications and requirements.

Mr. Lefebvre noted that last year the Narrow River Preservation Association joined with the Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association in their grant application. The Council noted it was good to see this independent proposal from the NRPA, which will compile and analyze twenty years of water quality testing data. The RIRC is requesting that NRPA make recommendations for future watershed actions based on the results of the analysis.

The proposed repairs and improvements along the Pawtuxet River walk will be mostly in Coventry with small segments in Scituate and West Warwick. Mr. Nero stated that this was the first major walk to be developed along a river in Rhode Island. It is twenty years old and gets heavy use. It is located along the north branch of the river, and badly needs maintenance and upgrades. One trail was built through a stream, and they would like to elevate that section if possible. The project will involve a lot of volunteer effort and they will check to see if permits are necessary.

Extensive discussion followed by the RIRC members regarding the fund allocation. Of concern was the amount cut from the Narrow River and Pawtuxet allocations. Following discussion of a number of alternatives, Ms. Sherman moved, and Ms. Staniszewski seconded the following motion: the RIRC award the recommended amounts of grants to the Watershed Councils, with three changes. The NRPA and Pawtuxet Councils will be awarded \$3,500 each, and the balance for the RIRC administrative account be \$344. In summary, \$22,100 in funds were allocated to grants, and \$344 was allocated to the RIRC administrative fund. The RIRC balance is to be transferred to the RIRC fiscal agent, the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council. Ms. Sherman accepted, as a friendly amendment, the motion by Ms. McGreavy, seconded by Mr. Callender, to include in the contracts the reviewer notes and the additional comment that the Pawtuxet River Authority and Watershed Council award is subject to any local or state permits. The motion as made and amended passed unanimously.

The results of the approved amended motion were as follows:

Kickemuit River Council, \$3000, Fish ladder sign with the condition that the sign credit RIRC & WRB.

Narrow River Preservation Association, \$3,500, Analysis of twenty years past water quality data in a "RiverWatch Results – 20th Anniversary Impact Report" with the condition that RIRC & WRB receive printed and electronic copies of the final Impact Report that includes recommendations for the future; and RIRC & WRB be credited in the report.

Pawtuxet River Authority & Watershed Council, \$3,500, Trail maintenance and improvements to the Phenix-Harris Riverwalk in Coventry with the condition that RIRC & WRB receive printed and electronic copies of a final report that includes before and after photos of the project, that RIRC & WRB be credited in the final report, and that the trail maintenance be done in compliance with state wetlands laws administered by RIDEM.

Salt Ponds Coalition, \$3,600, Nutrient/chlorophyll bacteria analysis for six salt pond sampling sites in the Green Hill and Point Judith Ponds. The proposal calls for pass through to URI Watershed Watch for water quality analysis; data will be used to compute the Aquatic Health Index (AHI) for each pond site; a condition of the grant is that RIRC & WRB receive printed and electronic copies of a final report that includes recommendations for the future; and RIRC & WRB be credited in the final report.

Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association, \$4,000, Coordination of Project Wet in RI, a nationwide, education-based nonprofit organization focusing on water education. Project Wet is a meritorious established program that would be beneficial to assist its use in the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed and RI; conditions of the grant are that the WPWA provides for representatives of the other watershed councils to attend the three workshops for non-formal educators referenced in the narrative; and that RIRC & WRB receive printed and electronic copies of a final report; and RIRC & WRB be credited in the final report.

Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council, \$4,000, Partial funding of ongoing education, recreation and monitoring programs (\$4000 of \$22500) and maintenance of canoes and trailer used for educational programs. A condition of the grant is that RIRC & WRB receive printed and electronic copies of a final report; and RIRC & WRB be credited in the final report.

Friends of the Moshassuck, \$500, Planting of six additional shade trees as part of the Collyer Field Riverine Forest Restoration Project to control invasive Japanese knotweed. A condition of the grant is that RIRC & WRB receive printed and electronic copies of a final report that includes before and after photos of the project; and RIRC & WRB be credited in the final report.

RI Rivers Council Administrative Expenses, \$344, to be forwarded to the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council, fiscal agent.

4. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the April 13, 2011, minutes were previously distributed to the members of the Council. Ms. McGreavy requested that the minutes be corrected on page 2, where she is incorrectly identified as Mr. McGreavy. Ms. McGreavy then moved to adopt the minutes as corrected, seconded by Mr. Callender. The minutes were unanimously approved.

5. RI Renewable Energy Siting Partnership Hydropower Potential Modeling

Mr. Lefebvre reported that RESP is a \$1.3 million federally funded study being conducted by the RI Office of Energy Resources in conjunction with URI to analyze solar, wind and hydropower potential in the state. RESP is holding monthly stakeholder meetings on the first Thursday night of the month at the URI Bay Campus. Mr. Lefebvre noted that Mr. Gonsalves was a presenter at the first stakeholder meeting in October. Mr. Lefebvre said he attended the second stakeholder on November 3rd meeting. Presenters explained that they were choosing two models for each domain (solar, wind, hydro) that have been previously developed. To examine hydropower, RESP is using the *Idaho National Laboratory Virtual Hydropower Prospector* and the *US Geological Survey StreamStats*. Chris Damon of the URI Environmental Data Center is overseeing the hydro modeling element of RESP which has scheduled to complete its array of projects by March 31, 2012. Mr. Lefebvre said he posted links to RESP and the two hydropower models on the news page of the Rivers Council website.

6. Appointments Process and Communications

Mr. Lefebvre said he had an opportunity to talk to Governor Chafee and his senior advisor, Stephen Hourahan, about appointments to the Rivers Council at the Pawtuxet Falls dam removal celebration on September 30, 2011. Mr. Lefebvre circulated correspondence dated October 17, 2011, from Mr. Stephen R. Hourahan. The letter acknowledged receipt of information from Mr. Lefebvre regarding appointments to the RIRC, confirmed that Mr. Hourahan's office will work with Mr. Lefebvre and RIRC on appointments and welcomed any recommendations that they may have. Mr. Hourahan anticipates submitting candidates for the RIRC to the Senate after the General Assembly session convenes in January 2012. Mr. Galloway and Mr. Jim Cole, author of the 2009 book, *Paddling Connecticut and Rhode Island: Southern New England's Best Paddling Routes*, were mentioned as possible nominees to Governor Chafee.

7. Officer Reports

Mr. Lefebvre provided meeting participants with a report that included grants and administrative expenses of the Rivers Council for the state Fiscal Years 2010 and 2011 and Fiscal Year 2012 to date. He said the report was of all grants and administrative expenses and not simply consolidated categories. The total amounts for Fiscal Years 2010 and 2011 were \$22,444.

Mr. Lefebvre also reported on updates to the RIRC website. He also circulated information about a bird's eye view photos of Rhode Island program that Don Bousquet and his son are presenting at the North Kingstown Free Library in December. Mr. Lefebvre said he thought it might be beneficial for the Rivers Council to invest in bird's eye photos of the major rivers of RI that look downstream from upstream. He said he might attend the library program and discuss with Mr. Bousquet the possibility of making photos of one or two rivers as a prototype. He said that the National Park Service may already have these type of photos for the Blackstone River. He said the bird's eye view angles would likely be more beneficial than continuous right angle aerial orthophotography to generate river stewardship. Council members recommended that RIDEM, the State Planning Office, and the US Natural Resources Conservation Service and other entities, including local watershed councils, be contacted to determine if these types of photos are currently available.

Ms. Sherman recommended that RIRC request that DOA reserve a conference room for RIRC's 2012 meetings. Mr. Lefebvre announced that there would not be a December meeting.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Callender moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Staniszewski. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

Post Meeting Note: Subsequent to the meeting, RIRC was informed by the RI DOA that the General Assembly passed a RIRC FY12 legislative grant of \$20,200. (a ten percent reduction from the FY11 \$22,444 RIRC legislative grant.) Accordingly, the grant recommendations with ten percent reductions are as follows:

Kickemuit River Council: \$2,700.
Narrow River Preservation Association: \$3,150.
Pawtuxet River Authority & Watershed Council: \$3,150.
Salt Ponds Coalition: \$3,240.
Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association: \$3,600.
Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council: \$3,600.
Friends of the Moshassuck: \$450.
RIRC Administrative Allocation: \$310.
Total: \$20,200.